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170626Z Mar 05

ACTION EB-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AF-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	COME-00	INL-00
	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	PERC-00	DS-00	EUR-00	FAAE-00
	VC-00	FRB-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00
	VCE-00	M-00	AC-00	NEA-00	NRC-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00
	OES-00	OIC-00	OMB-00	NIMA-00	PA-00	PM-00	GIWI-00
	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	FMPC-00	SP-00	SS-00	STR-00
	TRSE-00	EPAE-00	IIP-00	SCRS-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00
	DRL-00	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/000W	
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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1149  
INFO AMEMBASSY ABUJA  
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO  
AMEMBASSY DAKAR  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
USLO TRIPOLI  
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L NDJAMENA 000402

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EB, DRL, INR, AF, AF/C, AF/EPS, LONDON AND  
PARIS FOR AFRICAWATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/14/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [EPET](#) [CD](#)

SUBJECT: WAR OF WORDS OVER OIL REVENUE COLLEGE MEMBERSHIP

Classified By: P/E Officer Kathleen FitzGibbon for reasons 1.4 (b) and  
(d).

1. (C) Summary: Prime Minister Pascal Yoadjinnadji's rebuke of comments by the representative of human rights groups on the Oil Revenue Management College has touched off controversy in N'Djamena. The Government objected to College member Dobian Assingar's statement that new petroleum discoveries would be managed in a discriminatory fashion because they are not subject to the law establishing the revenue management system already in place. The Prime Minister asked the human rights collective in private exchanges to select a new representative. That group refused to remove Assingar and hopes that the Government drops the issue. Ambassador Wall expressed our concern to the Prime Minister that outsiders would view the Government's request as an attempt to undermine the College's independence. The issue seems to be quieting down, but it is too soon to tell if the Government is willing to put the matter to rest and salvage a graceful exit from "the Dobian Affair". End Summary.

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PRIME MINISTER REACTS TO ASSINGAR'S REMARKS  
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2. (C) During a Radio France International interview on March 2, Dobian Assingar, the representative of human rights groups on the Oil Revenue Management College, stated that Chad's oil revenue law is discriminatory because it does not apply to new oil discoveries. He called for one law that extends the same revenue system to new oil fields. Prime Minister Pascal Yoadjinnadji took exception with Assingar's remarks in a front page article in the government-influenced newspaper Le Progres on March 3. According to the Prime Minister, one cannot be a member of the Oil Revenue Management College and make policy prescriptions or disassociate oneself from the organization when speaking outside the country. The Prime Minister also referred to the announcement by the Council of Ministers last September, which stated that new oil revenues would be managed in the spirit of the current mechanism.

3. (C) On March 4, Yoadjinnadji met with human rights organizations and requested that Assingar be replaced. The President of the Chadian League for Human Rights, Massalbaye Tenebaye, refused. On March 9, Yoadjinnadji sent a letter to the collective of human rights organizations again requesting that Assingar be replaced as their representative. He told the collective that their representation on the College should not be "personalized" and that Assingar's replacement would make no difference in their representation on the body.

14. (C) Yoadjimnadji, in a meeting with Ambassador Wall on March 10, explained the Government's position on the "Dobian Affair" as the situation is now dubbed in the press. The Ambassador urged the Prime Minister to handle the issue discreetly, given the negative implications of the appearance that the Government is interfering with the College's independence. Yoadjimnadji claimed that the Government did not make the issue public.

15. (C) Yoadjimnadji also told the Ambassador that the application of the revenue management law must be adaptable to the country's situation. He said that the current fifteen percent of revenues dedicated to government operations is not enough to meet salary and other needs which were not known when the revenue formula was devised. He maintained that as a member of the College, Assingar should not tell the Government how to manage the next generation of revenues. There would be an appropriate time for the country to debate the issue and the Government has given its assurances that revenues from the new discoveries would be used in the "same spirit" as the previous revenues.

16. (C) The Prime Minister repeated his position that the College membership should not be personalized. He added that the human rights groups can be represented by someone else. Yoadjimnadji also told the Ambassador that he "invited" the human rights groups to take action, he did not "request" it.

The Ambassador pointed out that when the Government sends letters asking for the removal of an individual, most Chadians would view this as a demand, not an invitation. Yoadjimnadji assured the Ambassador he has no intention of forcing the human rights collective to do anything.

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AWAITING THE GOVERNMENT'S NEXT MOVES  
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17. (C) Assingar, who is a longtime friend of the Prime Minister, told P/E officer that he does not believe that Yoadjimnadji is behind the Government request. He suspects a French hand in the affair, given recent difficulties he has had transiting France, where he is the Vice President of a human rights collective, and the timing of the "attack", which comes only a few weeks after he stepped down as the President of LTDH. He said that he has made the same statements publicly on many occasions and the Government has not taken exception. In addition, he has written articles in Chadian newspapers critical of some of College's operations. Assingar's courtyard has been flooded with supporters since the beginning of the "affair".

18. (C) According to Assingar, the Government's actions are tied to an alleged larger plot to place a pliable human rights representative on the College. He said that the Government has already tried twice to replace the representation of legitimate human rights organizations with that of the umbrella group of Government-sponsored organizations (CASHIDO). Assingar said that he asked the human rights groups not to make public the March 9 letter from Yoadjimnadji so that the Government can have a "graceful" exit from the situation. However, Assingar said that if the Government persists in pushing for his removal, the human rights collective will go public with the letter and the death threats against Assingar. (Comment: Yoadjimnadji told the Ambassador the reports of death threats against Assingar are not true, but Assingar told P/E officer that Yoadjimnadji's own brother came to warn him about the threats to his life. This is not the first time that Assingar's life has been threatened. A vocal human rights activist for more than a decade, he was forced to escape through the back door and scale the compound wall when armed intruders paid a night visit to his home during the 1999 Moundou civil disturbances. End Comment.)

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THE VIEW FROM THE REVENUE MANAGEMENT BODY  
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19. (C) Ambassador Wall discussed the issue with the President of the Oil Revenue Management College, Lamana Abdoulaye and the General Secretary, Barka Michel on March 10. Lamana said that the College has established procedures, which clearly state that the member organizations nominate their own representatives. The College itself can only remove a member if a "grave error of morality", such as corruption, occurs. However, this would be an internal College matter which would be put to a vote. He said that the College is not likely to sanction Assingar and that it is up to the organization that nominated him as to whether he stays or goes. Lamana said that he hoped the issue was over. In the course of conversation, Barka mentioned that the Government wanted CASHIDO to be involved in nominating the members of civil society.

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COMMENT

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10. (C) Fortunately the Prime Minister has not publicly called for Dobian's dismissal. He was nonetheless passionate in defense of the Government's actions in our meeting with him, and it is unclear if he can let the issue drop. The longer the affair goes on, the more the public and the donors will begin to question the Government's intentions toward the College and the management of the country oil revenues. After two days of relative quiet, we are hopeful the issue already has been dropped, but it is too soon to know for

sure. We note that the Prime Minister and Assingar agree that the new discoveries need to fall under a revenue management scheme. They probably disagree over how the revenues will be divided. We will continue to remind our contacts of concerns over any moves that could be seen as tampering with the independence of the revenue oversight mechanism.

WALL

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